

Recruit, Retain, Repatriate

A Population Action Plan for Prince Edward Island



*Prince
Edward
Island*
CANADA

www.Mighty-PrinceEdwardIsland.ca

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As Canada enters its 150th year of Confederation, we must consider our position in terms of our assets and their potential. Central to our future success will be the proper development and management of our most valuable resource: our people. Growing our population and readying our workforce for job opportunities that reflect Prince Edward Island's economic prospects is fundamental to our sustained prosperity. This Action Plan lays out a path to building a resilient, diverse, and growing population in Prince Edward Island.

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Premier

H. Wade MacLauchlan



Population dashboard 2017-2022

Goal 1: Overall population growth

Grow the population of Prince Edward Island to 160,000.

Goal 2: Working-age population

Achieve a total working-age population of 100,000 persons.

Goal 3: Workforce participation rate

Continue to exceed the Canadian national average.

Goal 4: Interprovincial migration

Average a net gain of 100 working-age persons per year.

Goal 5 International immigration

Continue to work with our federal partners to promote Prince Edward Island as a great place to live, work and grow a business. Identify opportunities that will maintain our immigration levels of approximately 2,200 new Islanders per year.

Goal 6: Immigrant retention

Collaborate with our business and community partners to increase the retention of immigrants in Prince Edward Island. New immigration streams and pilot programs are expected to help us meet this goal.

Goal 7: Retention of international students

Retain 10 percent of international students graduating from Prince Edward Island post-secondary institutions.

Goal 8: Business start-ups

Continue to work with entrepreneurs to grow the start-up community in Prince Edward Island.

Goal 9: GDP per capita

Perform at or above the Canadian national average.

PEOPLE ARE PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND'S GREATEST RESOURCE

In recent years, the overall story of the development of Prince Edward Island's population has been positive. Since 2007, our province, driven by strong international immigration, has led the Atlantic Provinces in population growth. This influx of new Canadians has contributed to our province in many ways – socially, culturally and economically. We are on the right track. Our population is larger and more diverse than it was a decade ago.


At the same time, we must act now to slow and ultimately reverse two trends: out-migration and population

aging. Like most advanced economies, Prince Edward Island is getting older. Our aging population has an impact in all aspects of our society and economy, notably in our labour market. Although our population continues to increase, the reality is that we have more out-migration of young people and in-migration of older residents.

The challenge is clear: we must build a better balance in our population and workforce. And that means ensuring our young people have the best possible opportunities to stay and thrive in Prince Edward Island.

For our part, the Government of Prince Edward Island has made a commitment to 'recruit, retain and repatriate' a skilled and talented workforce. Government's role will be an indirect one. Our job will be to promote the Province as a place for people around the globe to make home. We will equally work together with Islanders to ensure that our environment for doing business is as welcoming and attractive as possible. This document outlines our plan to help build a resilient, diverse, and sustainable population for Prince Edward Islanders.





recruit, retain, repatriate

Why is a Population Action Plan necessary?



Prince Edward Island is getting older. In 1971, the median age of Islanders was just under 25. In 2017, our median age rose to almost 44. While we are the youngest province in Atlantic Canada, we are three years older than the Canadian average and six years older than our Prairie cousins.

Like most developed countries, fewer children are being born in Prince Edward Island. At present, the birth rate is 1.56 children. In order for our province to sustain its current population naturally, that rate would have to rise to approximately 2.1.

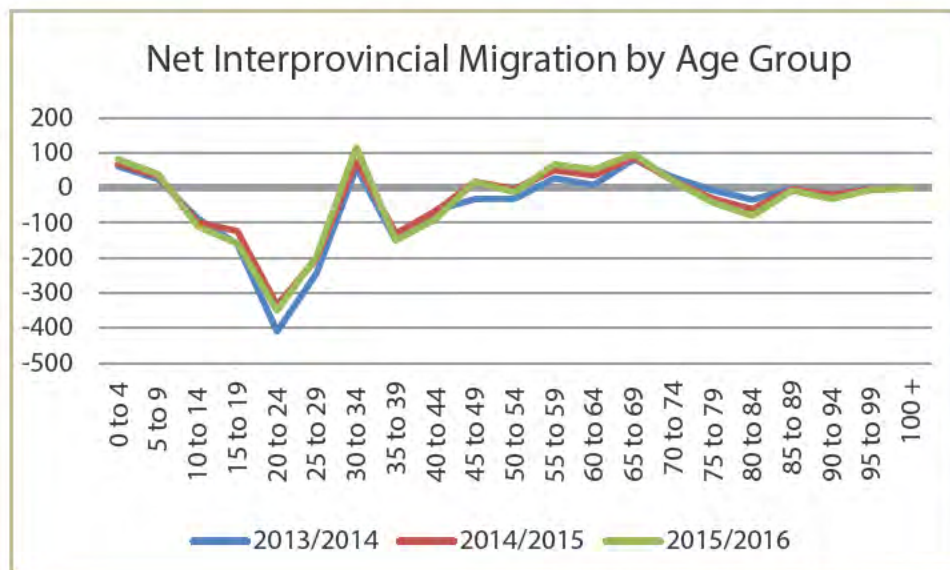
However, between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016, there were 1,306 births and 1,321 deaths in Prince Edward Island. The net result was negative natural growth (births minus deaths) in our population for the first time on record. While indicators suggest that this trend is starting to reverse

in 2016, seeking to attract and retain immigrants must be at the core of future population growth in Prince Edward Island.

An aging population also has a direct effect on the economy and the labour market. Overall, it means that a higher percentage of our population is being supported by working Islanders. In 2012, for the first time on record, Prince Edward Island had more seniors than youth under the age of 15. The number of people aged 65 and over is expected to rise by over 10,000 by 2026. As the proportion of older

residents' increases in our province, a smaller percentage of working-aged Islanders is being called upon to generate the revenue that is required to support essential public services, such as health care and education.

Like our regional neighbours, out-migration continues to be a challenge: in 2015-16, 2,875 inter-provincial migrants came to Prince Edward Island while 3,604 residents left the province for other areas of Canada. The net interprovincial loss was 729 people. Over the past decade, net out-migration has translated to a net loss to



Over the past decade, net out-migration has translated to a net loss to Prince Edward Island of 7,816 youth aged 20 to 29.

Prince Edward Island of 7,816 youth aged 20 to 29. This loss of young people for work and academic opportunities has the effect of amplifying the increase to our provincial median age. Central to any future success will be our ability to retain our youth.

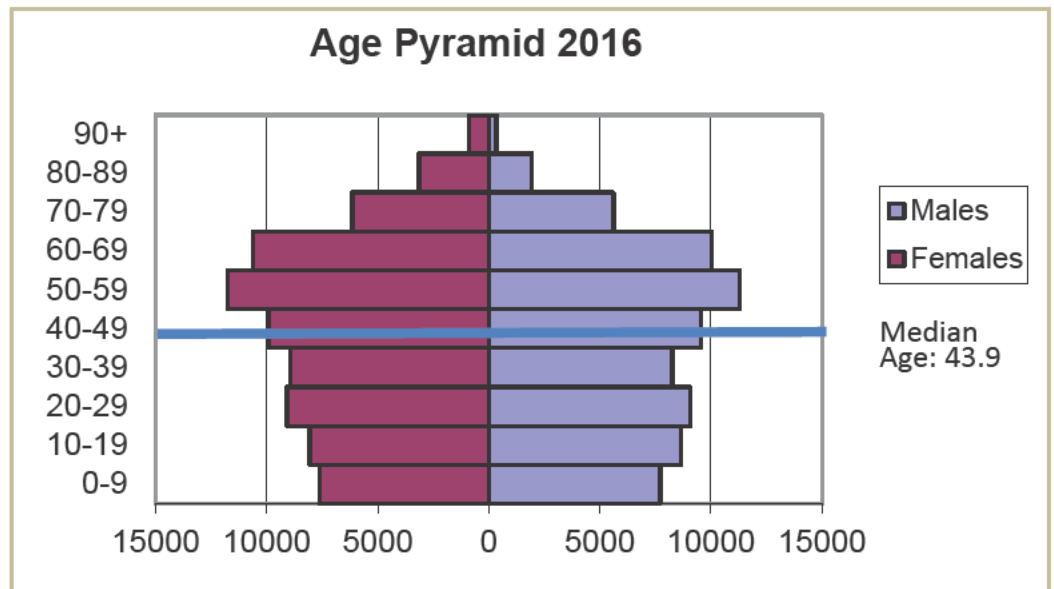
Although, the overall trend of out-migration of youth aged 20 to 29 is a challenge facing Prince Edward Island, the net gain of the 30-34 age segment of our population is a positive development. Prince Edward Island has a significant competitive advantage in what might be called our livability story. Our ability to promote our province as place to live and thrive will be a key factor to attracting "top talent" now and in the future. International migration remains an important factor in population growth

and labour market development for Prince Edward Island.

After decreasing by 4.4 percent in 2014-15, international immigration rebounded in 2015-16 with growth of 50 percent. At a rate of 13.6 per thousand, our province had the highest immigration rate in the country – tied with Alberta. By comparison, the immigration rate for Canada was 8.9 per thousand. Moreover, it is now believed that increased international immigration will reverse the decline in the working-age population beginning in 2017 and beyond, increasing to 118,794 by 2056.

While we are deservedly proud of our expanding immigration story, one challenge for Prince Edward Island is retaining these new residents. At pre-

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sent, we retain only 38 percent of our immigrants over the long-term and many leave Prince Edward Island after just two years. Barriers to gaining access to appropriate housing, transportation and childcare can make retention even more challenging in our rural communities. Our long-term prosperity will therefore depend upon merging immigration growth with new economic opportunities. Improving retention must be an area of focus.

As we approach 2022, Prince Edward Island faces a mix of opportunities and challenges with its population. Squaring up to these challenges and making the most of these opportunities will be fundamental to sustaining our prosperity and quality of life.

PRIORITIES INCLUDE:

- *growing our population and readying our working-age population for job possibilities in areas of economic growth in Prince Edward Island;*
- *adjusting the distribution of our population through retention, recruitment, and repatriation to help overcome the economic and demographic challenges faced by Island communities;*
- *continuing to recruit new immigrants and placing greater focus on their retention through settlement initiatives and economic development opportunities; and*
- *bending our population aging curve in Prince Edward Island.*

With these priorities front of mind, the Government of Prince Edward Island has set the ambitious target of growing our population by 160,000 people by the end of 2022. And in the decade beyond, we hope to have 170,000 people calling the Island home.

A call to *action*



Now, more than ever, we need to do what Islanders have always done when our province is faced with a challenge. We need to put our collective shoulder to the wheel and press forward. Our aging population and shrinking labour force have the real potential to negatively affect the future prosperity of Prince Edward Island. And so, today, we must chart a course to grow our population, expand our skills, and strengthen our workforce. We must invest for tomorrow.

The Government of Prince Edward Island has set ambitious targets for near and long-term population growth in our province. That growth must not just come from abroad – we must also look for opportunities at home. These targets are intended to send a clear signal that Prince Edward Island is committed to sustainable prosperity for all Islanders – today, tomorrow, and in the years beyond. Building depth and capacity within our population will therefore be critical to our future economic success.

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Population Action Plan

This Population Action Plan outlines our plan of action to grow our population and strengthen our workforce in communities across Prince Edward Island. Ensuring a positive trajectory for population growth in Prince Edward Island is not the work of our Government alone. Federal and municipal partners, private businesses, community organizations, and local leaders all contribute to making our province home for new residents. The success of this Action Plan will therefore depend, in large measure, on our ability to work together.

To this end, we have organized our course of action under three priority areas. Added to those areas are a Rural Population Action Plan and a commitment to measurement and accountability:

Recruit Action Plan — This action plan places a strong emphasis on attracting skilled and entrepreneurial young people and immigrants to Prince Edward Island. It calls on our Government to partner with the Federal Government, post-secondary institutions, communities, and the private sector to recruit new Islanders and provide attractive options for staying in Prince Edward Island.

Retain Action Plan — This action plan focuses on finding ways to maximize retention rates for new immigrants and to keep more of our youth and our skilled workforce in Prince Edward Island. It supports the continuing efforts by local communities and organizations to make living, working, and raising a family in Prince Edward Island more attractive. This action plan promotes diverse and inclusive communities and ensures a welcoming environment for international students and immigrants, including both settlement and employment services. It also includes undertaking a detailed labour market assessment to determine our needs and opportunities over the next decade and supporting initiatives that connect employers in Prince Edward Island with job seekers, such as re-training programs, internships, and on-the-job training opportunities.

Repatriate Action Plan — This action plan supports the repatriation of Islanders living in other parts of Canada and abroad. It focuses on extending a dialogue with expatriate workers and



The number of people aged 65 and over is expected to rise by over 10,000 by 2026.

entrepreneurs and launching new marketing initiatives to entice Islanders to return home. This action plan also supports collaboration with local businesses, education and training providers, and community leaders to identify present and future opportunities in our labour market for those wanting to return to Prince Edward Island.

Rural Population Action Plan — This action plan advances population growth in rural Prince Edward Island through our communities, businesses, residents, and all levels of government. This collaborative enterprise is built on three principles – retention, recruitment and repatriation – and identifies priorities for population growth in four regions: East, Capital/ Central, East Prince/West Queens and West.

Measurement and Accountability Commitment — This commitment aims to ensure that performance under this Population Action Plan is measured and reported to the public in an accessible way. Information and performance data will be collected, analyzed, and delivered to Islanders on a regular basis. Reports will summarize the progress made under each of the action plans – including key performance indicators – and highlight the investments being made by our government and its partners.

Recruit Action Plan

An important ingredient in sustainable economic growth is the ability to grow our working age population, increase our number of entrepreneurs, and rejuvenate our workforce. In recent years, the overall story of our population has been a positive one. Since 2007, Prince Edward Island has led the Atlantic Provinces in population growth. This growth has been driven, in particular, by strong international immigration.

This influx of new residents, however, must not just come from abroad. While our largest municipalities often attract many of these new Islanders, we need to focus our efforts on attracting and retaining a greater number of immigrants — both international and out-of-province — in other communities in Prince Edward Island. Building a better balance in our population and workforce will help us overcome a number of challenges faced by small and medium-sized communities throughout our province. Critical to our future success will be our ability to attract greater numbers of international and out-of-province immigrants to our province as a whole.

KEY ACTIONS

1. Promote immigration to regions where labour shortages have been identified or where certain skills are required, and target immigrants with experiences that complement existing industries in Prince Edward Island.
2. Collaborate with business leaders and regional economic advisory councils to develop a provincial entrepreneurship strategy focused on new business start-ups and succession planning. Identify strategic approaches that will attract Island youth and immigrant entrepreneurs, with particular emphasis on supports for entrepreneurs in rural Prince Edward Island.
3. Review provincial nominee streams to ensure they address the changing needs of the Prince Edward Island economy.
4. Ensure settlement supports are accessible and available in all regions for immigrants. Work with community partners to create a regional presence to the delivery of settlement services throughout the province.
5. Implement strategies to increase inter-provincial migration to Prince Edward Island by promoting to other residents living in Canada the advantages that Prince Edward Island offers as a place to raise a family, start a business, or launch a new career.
6. Explore immigration efforts on business acquisition opportunities and match the needs of local employers with the skills of new immigrants, such as the relocation of the Indian tech start-up, IKBEE, to Summerside through our Start-Up Visa Program.
7. Strengthen efforts to attract and retain our post-secondary graduates — including international students — by leveraging opportunities.
8. Support communities in developing “welcome to the community” initiatives that are aimed at fostering a culture of inclusiveness where newcomers feel they belong and their skills are valued.
9. Initiate a coordinated international education strategy. Build on efforts to recruit and retain international students in the K-12 school system in Prince Edward Island, and look for opportunities to expand homestay programs to communities across our province.
10. Work with La Coopérative d’intégration francophone de l’Île-du-Prince-Édouard and other stakeholders in an effort to attract a greater number of Francophones from abroad and other parts of Canada to Prince Edward Island.
11. Assist and support regulators and professional organizations who are working with individuals with foreign credentials to find work related to their occupation in our province.
12. Continue to expand the WorkPEI website to match job seekers and employers looking for new employees.

Retain Action Plan



We must find ways to maximize retention rates for new immigrants and to keep more of our youth – and our skilled workforce – here in Prince Edward Island. We are competing with the world to attract and retain “top talent” from abroad and other parts of Canada. Fortunately, Prince Edward Island has some advantages. The Mighty Island: A Framework for Economic Growth describes the benefits of scale. Island residents have easy access to both rural communities and urban centres. We are also blessed with lifestyle advantages that have become more important as technology enables residents to work from anywhere. But we must seek to raise the international consciousness of Prince Edward Island as a place to live, work, and play for 12 months of the year. By seizing these opportunities, we can make our quality of life even better for all residents of Prince Edward Island. One of the key determinants of retention, however, is our capacity to provide people with greater opportunities. People must be confident that they can enjoy a rewarding life here in Prince Edward Island.

KEY ACTIONS

1. Engage with industry to find collaborative employment opportunities across strategic sectors, including expansion of the “Team Seafood” concept to other sectors, such as IT, construction, and transportation.
2. Introduce a new incentive program for graduates of UPEI, Holland College, and Collège de l’Île who stay in Prince Edward Island after completing their education.
3. Continue to leverage existing immigration channels and the new three-year pilot project on immigration in order to better match the needs of local employers with the skills of new immigrants.
4. Work with the Aboriginal people of Prince Edward Island to develop a workforce development strategy, with a particular emphasis on creating opportunities for youth.
5. Build greater awareness amongst high school students about the employment opportunities that exist locally and the kind of post-secondary training that is required in order to secure employment in Prince Edward Island (e.g. Aerospace Academy Diploma program at Three Oaks Senior High School).
6. Develop innovative initiatives to link new immigrants with investment and career opportunities in Prince Edward Island.
7. Continue to engage with industry, academia, and government partners to undertake high-quality labour-market analyses that will better inform policy and program solutions aimed at our new employment needs.
8. Expand employment and mentorship opportunities for youth and immigrants, including a “First Job” program for new graduates.
9. Continue to work with small and medium-sized employers to support human resources, productivity, and succession-planning needs.
10. Partner with employers and community-based organizations to drive inclusive growth for all Islanders, including our youth, Aboriginal persons, visible minorities, new immigrants, and persons with disabilities.

Repatriate Action Plan

Thousands of former Islanders and their families are now residing elsewhere in Canada and abroad. Many of these talented individuals would like to return to Prince Edward Island if the right opportunity presented itself. To expand our economy, we must find new ways to open a dialogue with skilled expatriate workers and entrepreneurs. In recent years, we have had several successful stories of repatriated Islanders. The new business operations in Kings County by Aspin Kemp & Associates is just one case where a highly-successful, community-minded entrepreneur has returned home to Prince Edward Island. It is also important to note that successes through recruitment and retention will also assist our repatriation efforts by making Prince Edward Island a more attractive place to live, work, and play. We must continue this coordinated approach to population renewal.

KEY ACTIONS

1. Continue to engage with industries and communities to expand the Island expatriate network.
2. Harness the power of technology and networking platforms to communicate with expatriate workers and entrepreneurs, making them aware of job opportunities and customized incentive programs to relocate or establish business operations in Prince Edward Island.
3. Through a new Islander Ambassador Program, empower communities and other organizations to develop pilot initiatives focused on connecting with expatriates. Work with communities across Prince Edward Island to populate the WorkPEI expatriate database and launch customized campaigns to grow our regional populations.
4. Celebrate our repatriation success stories through communication and social marketing platforms, including peisuccess.ca.
5. Find new opportunities to collaborate on repatriation initiatives and activities with industries, post-secondary institutions, not-for-profit organizations, and local governments.
6. Establish an annual repatriation event to promote all that Prince Edward Island has to offer to expatriates and build stronger connections with expatriates in strategic locations in Canada and abroad.



Rural Population Action Plan

The economy of Prince Edward Island is both traditional and modern, rural and urban. But, at its core, our economy is successful because a group of people, who are drawn from every community and sector across our province, are passionate about Prince Edward Island. Their success is our success. Creativity, entrepreneurship, and hard work are all values that are rooted deeply here. For example, 32% of our provincial GDP comes from small and medium-sized enterprises. And most of these entrepreneurs live in rural communities. 50% of the projects supported by Innovation PEI – both in terms of numbers and dollars – are outside of Charlottetown and Summerside. The growth of Prince Edward Island therefore depends upon the growth of its people. In short, we are all Islanders.

That is not to say that there are no challenges in Prince Edward Island. While the overall story of our population growth has been a positive one, most of these new residents have settled in our largest municipalities. In order to ensure that communities beyond our capital are sustainable, we need to refocus our efforts on building more balance in our population and workforce. And that means taking action to adjust the distribution of our population so that more residents settle in rural Prince Edward Island. With these objectives in mind, we have developed a rural population action plan built on three principles: retention, recruitment and repatriation. This action plan must be a priority for our province.

KEY ACTIONS

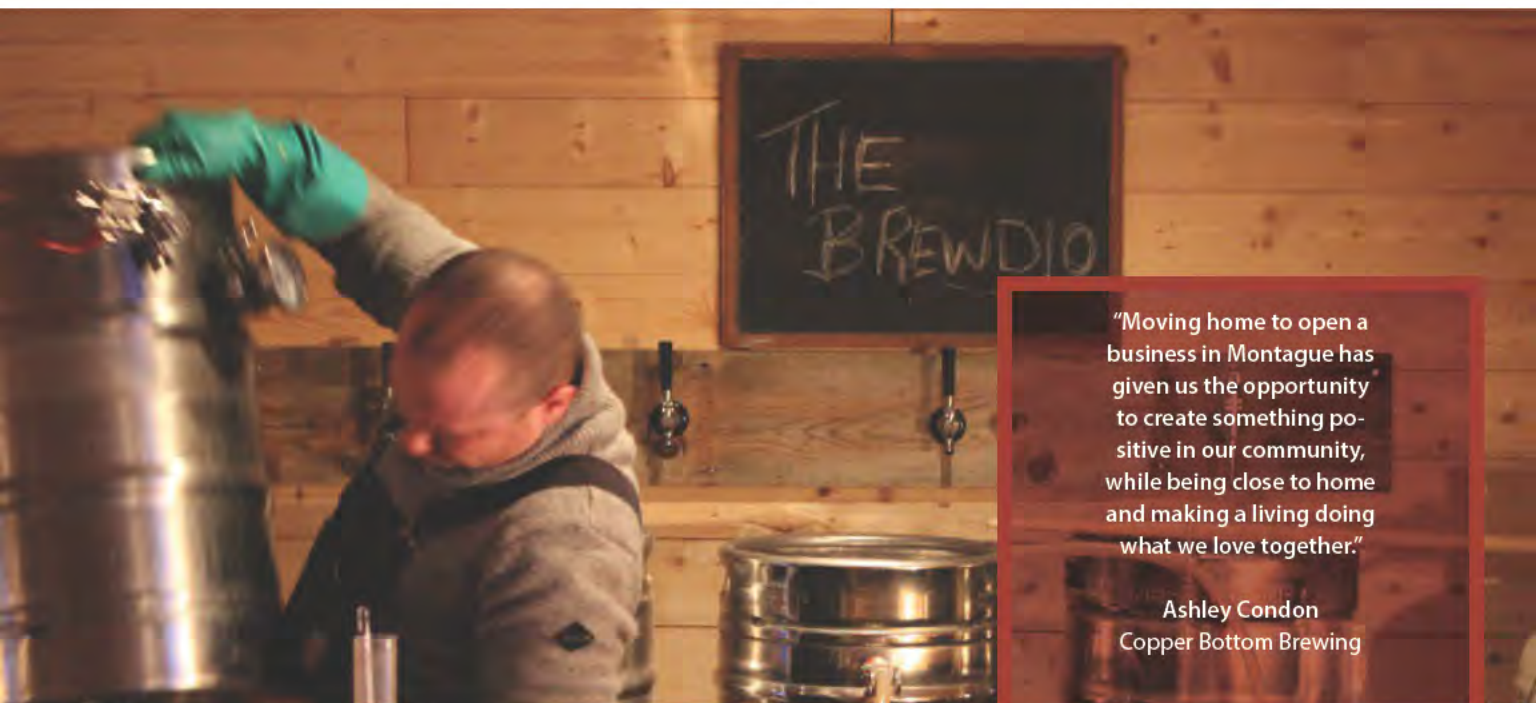
1. Establish four regional economic advisory councils in East, Capital/ Central, East Prince/West Queens and West, to guide, develop and help drive economic growth across Prince Edward Island.
2. Develop growth strategies for each region, identifying and leveraging strength areas, and drawing on existing economic development organizations, as well as municipal and federal governments, to ensure a collaborative effort.
3. Identify priorities in our regional populations, namely Kings, Central, East Prince and West Prince, so that the needs of local businesses and employers are matched with the skills of new employees.
4. Collaborate with communities and other stakeholders to ensure the continued use of strategic infrastructure and facilities, such as the repurposing of Georgetown Timber and the conversion of the unused Somers Shoe Store to a business incubation and information technology centre.
5. Continue to work with service providers to expand high-speed internet to residential and commercial customers across Prince Edward Island. Our goal is for every Islander to have access to high-speed internet up to 25 megabits per second by the end of 2018.
6. Focus immigration on business succession and the attraction of entrepreneurs to start the next generation of great businesses in rural Prince Edward Island.
7. Work with community partners to ensure regional access to settlement services throughout the province.
8. Contribute to efforts to recruit and retain international students in Prince Edward Island by connecting these ambitious students with meaningful career pathways in rural Prince Edward Island and, in particular, expand the scope of the work being done by the International Student Employer Liaison Officer to include a rural lens.
9. Ensure a welcoming environment for international students and immigrants through both regional settlement strategies and rural employment opportunities. Support communities seeking to host welcoming initiatives that contribute to our culture of inclusiveness where newcomers feel that they belong in Prince Edward Island and that their skills are valued here.
10. Work with the University of Prince Edward Island and Holland College to further integrate their education and training programs with our current and future needs in terms of a skilled and educated workforce.
11. Build greater awareness amongst high school students about the employment opportunities that exist locally.



Our ability to promote our province as place to live and thrive will be a key factor to attracting "top talent" now and in the future.

International migration remains an important factor in population growth and labour market development for Prince Edward Island.

Working together for the betterment of our province



"Moving home to open a business in Montague has given us the opportunity to create something positive in our community, while being close to home and making a living doing what we love together."

Ashley Condon
Copper Bottom Brewing

Our province has an extraordinary opportunity to work together to build a more resilient, diverse, and sustainable population in Prince Edward Island – now and in the future. While the overall story of our population has been positive over the past decade, we know there is more to do. We must take action to slow and ultimately reverse out-migration and population aging. We must also build better balance in our population and workforce. And that means ensuring that people have the best possible opportunities to stay and thrive in Prince Edward Island. The action plans outlined in this document cannot happen without the support of all Islanders. Individuals, business leaders, community organizations across our province must move forward — together — to manage, nurture, and strengthen our most valuable resource: our people



“ In our population, in our economy, in our government, in everything that we’re doing, we have to think about what our young people are doing and how we can make ourselves younger as an overall population of Prince Edward Islanders. ”

Premier
H. Wade MacLauchlan



From small things, big things come

We may be small in size, but we're big on ambition.

entrepreneurial spirit, PEI inspires people to dream big, break boundaries, and act with passion. All supported by a government committed to helping your ideas become reality.

The Mighty Island

For more examples of how anything is possible on Prince Edward Island, visit...
princeedwardisland.ca/mighty-island

